1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

842 quite explicit, and married couples are supposed to want children. Those few 183 women who admitted to me, confidentially, not wanting children had very high divorce records, while all others conformed to expectations when asked specifically concerning their desire for offspring.

842 Traditionally the Kanuri believe that conception results from simultaneous orgasm during sexual intercourse. This information I got from older men who do not, however, know in any detail when or how often such an event actually takes 843 place. Instead they reason that it has occurred when their wife reports a pregnancy. [842] When a woman is over one month late in a menstrual cycle (a few said forty-five days) conception is suspected, and she begins to buy charms on the market to safeguard a normal gestation. During this initial period the husband and wife, ideally at least, should not speak of the pregnancy to anyone until at least the second menstrual period has been missed, and then only to their very close friends and relatives. Such talk, indeed any excess conversation about the pregnancy, is believed to be dangerous to the course and development of a normal pregnancy. Even during the later stages just before birth only very cryptic references are made by the parents when they refer to the coming event. Pregnancy, like a number of other occa- [984] sions in one's lifetime, is considered a very fragile time, a time when an individual is vulnerable to maliciousness from humans or spirits. Because it is difficult to know about such maliciousness, until after its effects are felt, it is better to avoid mentioning the susceptible circumstances.

[833] Sexual intercourse is continued throughout pregnancy since the Kanuri believe that such activity makes for an easier labor at birth by keeping the passage open and providing fluids for the child and the mother.

Although the Kanuri recognize the pregnancy period of nine months, the woman continues her normal work until the lying-in period is signaled by labor. On the other hand exceptions to the nine-month period occur, and some women claim to have been pregnant for years although no outward sign is visible. This latter condition is referred to as *bənji*, that is to say an embryo that will not come out of the womb. A woman may miss a menstrual cycle once and then become convinced that she has conceived. If her conviction holds she may, after menstruating again, diagnose the condition as a *bənji*. Missing a menstrual period, however, is not absolutely necessary for the diagnosis. Women who spoke of having *bənji* felt that any woman could have one, but they also agreed that in their experience the woman was usually older and either had not given birth for a long time or had had a completely infertile marriage history. Certainly many Kanuri women seem to be barren, and this cultural belief must help to assuage the disappointment of a hopeful but sterile woman. It may also serve to alleviate the loss of womanly role for an older woman who sees herself being replaced in her reproductive functions by her husband's younger wives.

Birth

844 When the woman is about to give birth, she is assisted by her own mother if she is in the vicinity, or her mother-in-law if she is living with her husband's family, and sometimes by a specialist in midwifery. There are stories told about

584 boy; if she does not and refuses to marry him, the arrangements are for naught. The father cannot force the marriage, and marriages arranged solely by parents over the objection of the children, cannot take place.

582 369 Average age at which boys marry differs from the small villages to the larger towns. In the small villages boys marry young, and when they reach the age of eighteen or nineteen all are married. In the large towns and cities, boys marry after age twenty, and some do not marry until they reach thirty. Girls marry at the same age in the villages and in the cities.

582 If the girl's family is able to provide her with household equipment and clothing, she will marry at the age of eleven or twelve. If the family is poor she will marry slightly later, at the age of thirteen or fourteen. The minimum age of marriage for a girl is ten. A marriage at that age is possible, but the girl is con-

[833] sidered young. A husband usually waits before beginning to have sexual intercourse with a bride of such tender years. A boy

[591] may marry at the very young age of twelve or thirteen. If his father wishes to arrange such a marriage, he will build his son a house adjacent to his own, and husband and wife will grow up together. A boy will postpone marriage in order to accumulate money for a bride-price. If the father of a boy has no money to pay the bride-price for his son, the boy will postpone marriage for several years while father and son farm and save money. A girl never postpones marriage; by the age of fifteen almost all girls are married.

567 There are no rules governing sexual intercourse with
595 concubines as there
[833] are with wives. A man may sleep with his concubine any time he wishes
[941] or avoid her as much as he pleases, whereas it is mandatory that he spend alternate nights with wives even if one is menstruating. Conflicts may arise between wives and concubines if the latter is overly
567 favoured sexually by the husband. A more serious cleavage arises in
595 the circumstances of the wife's being barren and a concubine having
593 given birth to a son and heir to her master. It is known by all that
428 one day the son will succeed to a large portion of his father's wealth plus his position as household head. In such a case the boy's slave mother knows that eventually she is to become the respected senior
[184] woman of the compound in which she is now a menial. Although one case was observed, it must be emphasized that such instances are rare in
554 the contemporary society. Only political leaders from the level of
567 town head up, and hereditary nobles were observed to keep concubines.
595
178 An extremely wealthy trader, who felt very proud of his four wives in seclusion, answered that it would be improper of him to have a concubine because he was only a trader. Seventy-five years ago a man of his position would have had a score of them.

567 Several upper class informants spoke of the traditional prac-
595 tice of giving young concubines to upper class boys at their circum-
281 cision, so that they might have a female of their own in order to learn
178 about sexual intercourse. Because of the waning of the slave population numerically this practice seems to be dying out, (only one case of a male who had been raised in this way of the younger, 20 to 30 years ago, generation was recorded).

595 When a man marries a second, third, or fourth wife it is customary for him to give a sum equal to approximately half the luwal-

593 activities. That is to say, culturally speaking, there is an ideology
[124] of male dominance in the husband-wife relationship. This prescription for male superiority was enacted one day by a female entertainer who attempted to teach the anthropologist's wife the proper manner for approaching the presence of a husband. She came in as if bearing food and went down on her knees with her head bowed to one side and eyes downcast, while demurely presenting the offering to her lord and master, and then quietly removing herself. Although this was all performed in a theatrical manner, the attitude of submissiveness was the lesson
833 being taught. Again, although sexual experimentation is highly thought
562 of by some males, it is generally frowned on for the male to assume a position underneath the woman during coitus. This is rationalized by the belief that the semen will run back into the male and "go bad", causing disease, i.e. something bad will result from a male allowing
229 a woman to lie on top of him. This is reminiscent of the claim of one
554 very high ranking Kanuri nobleman who, when discussing apartment buildings in America, disdained this architectural concept as distateful to himself, unless only he and people of equal rank were allowed living quarters on the top floor.

593 The observed facts of interpersonal relations in marriage
123 are enormously various, and a full circle of almost complete conformity to complete denial of the cultural ideal can be seen in almost any Bornu town where there is a representative sample of the various strata of Kanuri society. The following are some of the major variables operating in the marriage relationship which affect the extent of denial or conformity to the ideology of male dominance.

832 ward or a woman talking to men out in the open beyond her compound
832 walls, or immoderate behaviour at a dance. However, the conditions
831 are extremely vague and really boil down in the last analysis to a recognition of universally held motivations rather than any definite behaviour. Informants simply take it for granted that almost any one, including the anthropologist, indulges in sexual intercourse of illicit nature given the opportunity.

831 The extent of male dominance is not the only variable con-
• 833 trolling the incidence of adultery among females. There is also the appeal of skill, attraction, and variety in sexual experience. The Kanuri value skill in intercourse and value the experience itself as a highly pleasurable one which varies greatly from person to person. For example, informants seemed agreed on the pleasure-giving attributes of certain physiological variations in the male and female genitalia, and scaled these as being better or worse for sexual intercourse. Consequently, wide sexual experience is desirable from the point of
578 view of sensual pleasure. Besides this sensual factor, the writer re-
837 ceived the impression that there is a covert recognition of a general female desire to subvert male dominance. This seems to be expressed in the attempts by women to obtain sexual freedom, which the male practises, but forbids and tries to prohibit to the female. This latter point was illustrated over and over again by the attitudes of some of the younger more vocal wives, who constantly joked about adultery or made allusions to it, as a kind of game or trick that a wife plays on her husband.

837 One final point can be made about the locus of marital in-
628 fidelity. As will be shown later, groups of Kanuri towns and villages are joined together into marketing communities. Furthermore, well

881 informants feel that it is better if a girl is married before she men-
582 struates and claim that religion prescribes this as the best kind of first marriage for a girl. Exceptions are, of course, quite common and not regarded as very bad as long as the girl is a "virgin" (i.e.
585 proven so on her wedding night). When she marries for the first time
[302] a girl does not automatically change her status. She is still considered a fero gana (a small girl) just as she was before marriage, and for some little time continues to wear her hair in the young girl style. As one informant put it:

[833] 881 [885] She knows nothing, she copulates yes, but takes no interest in such things, there is no pleasure in it for her. When she bleeds, then she is kanu kura (a mature woman) and she knows everything and will take pleasure from sexual intercourse. When the first blood comes the girl will feel shame and tell no one, only her close friends, who will tell her mother. Her mother will come and gather together her friends and relatives (female) and cook food and give sada'a (offerings to the poor).

885 [302] Sometime after the onset of menstruation the young girl changes her hair style to the typical and distinctive styling of the adult Kanuri woman. It is not necessary for her to become a completely different person immediately upon taking up the status of married woman. Indeed, she still retains many of her childhood friends. In a completely new locale she first obtains age-mate friends who are, as often as not, pre-pubertal children.

Over the first one or two years of marriage, young brides are more and more to be seen with the other adult women of the compound and the neighbourhood whose main activities and interests centre around marketing, cooking, obtaining water, gossiping and engaging in women's festivities. Less and less are they interested in playing and chatting with the young pre-pubertal children, whose activities become progressively remote from their own.

882 lack of achieved skill in some area of behaviour. This extension of the term for child into adolescence must not be mistaken for the European cultural trait of confusing childhood and adulthood in the adolescent period. It refers not just to a lack of skill, but more generally to a lack of power and authority, and in this sense can be utilized to describe anyone until he is an old man. In this context the term is applied to mean that in some particular manner the person is like a small boy in relation to others around him, i.e. he must defer to them. People do not find this unnatural and even middle aged men may refer to themselves as tada gana (small boy).(1)

883 From the time of true physiological puberty onward, the boy associates more and more with other young zairo and takes part more or less freely in the banter of age-mates, and those slightly older. These young boys go to markets, play together, discuss local gossip and politics, and often joke about possible and actual nocturnal [833] adventures with women. On this last point, boys generally receive their first sexual experiences after puberty from divorced women who may vary in age anywhere from fifteen to fifty. More often that not, it is reported that the first experiences are with older women because of the competition for the younger sexually accessible females, (i.e. those who are divorced). Like young men everywhere they discuss the merits of various occupations, the desirability of rural or urban life, but also speak to one another at great length about the qualities of various "big men" (kam kura) in Bornu, and the benefits received by their followers. Today, boys also learn to smoke cigarettes, gamble and to drink intoxicating liquors during this period.

882 463 A primary function of this age status for adolescent boys

(1) See below, p. 174.

517 teming to court cases, horse racing, radio, phonographs, newspapers, political meetings, and cinema shows (in Maiduguri). Some of these items, both traditional and acquired as a result of culture contact, require expenditures. Thus praise-singing which validates status, or 511 [554] even creates it momentarily where it does not exist, may become almost a social narcotic when used by some highly motivated person who wishes to obtain higher status but cannot, and thus buys it in one or two minute lumps of time from the singers. Again sexual affairs (male speaking) for sheer pleasure can be a costly entertainment, especially if the [833] [524] man seeks variety. Other traditional items, such as gambling (now [517] done with European playing cards), learning to read the Koran, trips to other localities, visiting markets with no practical purpose, may [177] all lead easily to some expenditures. With growing culture contact and westernization we may expect that items such as radios, newspapers, and movies will begin entering family budgets, as they have already done for the urban population.

276 The major traditional stimulants in Bornu are kola-nuts, [273] millet beer and tobacco flowers for women. Kola-nuts are chewed almost universally by both sexes, and form part of leisure time intercourse. It is customary to have nuts at weddings, naming ceremonies 276 and other ritual occasions, which are given out to guests. Generally 511 speaking, expenditures reported by men for kola-nuts were low in comparison to food and clothing. However, in several cases - the District Head, the head butcher, a kola-nut retailer, a city trader, an N.A. messenger, an ex-cattle trader now a farmer, and a hides and skins trader, the calculated annual expense approached or equalled clothing expenditures. [302] Women colour their teeth with gworongo (Salonacea Incanum) and chew tobacco flowers and kola-nuts, but generally obtain the income for